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Physic and Physicians.

THE
ANNUAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Alabama State Medical Association,

AT THE CAPITOL,

DECEMBER 10, 1849.

BY WILLIAM O. BALDWIN, M. D.,

FELLOW OF THE ASSOCIATION.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE ASSOCIATION.

MONTGOMERY:
JOB OFFICE OF THE ALABAMA JOURNAL.
1850.

Baldwin (W. O.)

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ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Association and Fellow Citizens :

STANDING here, for the first time in my life, a public speaker, I need not tell you the hour is one peculiarly embarrassing to me. Philosophers have numbered NOVELTY among the highest pleasures of the imagination. It may be so to the disinterested speaker ; but to me, the singularity of my present position is exceedingly painful, from the ardent desire I feel to give interest and impressiveness to this occasion. Leaving, however, any remarks personal to myself, I pass immediately to the theme which I have selected for a brief discussion.

The gentlemen who addressed you at your former meetings, wisely and forcibly presented for your consideration such suggestions relative to legal enactments, and other measures calculated to advance the usefulness and elevate the standard of the Medical Profession, as its condition in our State demands ; and, so comprehensive were their views, and minute their recommendations in this particular, that scarcely any room is left for farther observation. I have, therefore, thought that perhaps I would better consult your pleasure in the present instance, by offering a few general reflections on PHYSIC and PHYSICIANS.

In the language of a late distinguished statesman, if Cicero, in the commencement of one of his orations, could find cause to congratulate himself upon the felicity of his subject, because the occa-

sion required him to dwell "upon the virtues and achievements of the great Pompey—a man who had been, from his earliest youth, identified with the glory of his country,—who had transcended and eclipsed the recorded honors of her Scipios and Metellus", and under whose auspices 'Victory flew with her eagles' from Lusitania to Caucasus and the Euphrates: * * what would not the genius of the Roman orator, who found so much scope for the amplifications of his unrivalled eloquence in the events of a single life and the glory of a few campaigns, have made of a subject so interesting in itself—so peculiarly affecting and so dear to his auditors—so fertile, so various, so inspiring, as that to which he who now addresses you will have been indebted for whatever of interest or of attention it may be his good fortune to awaken."

I have here, gentlemen, prepared a condensed outline of the history of Medicine, from its earliest records up to the days of Sydenham, together with a narration of some of the causes which combined to hinder its early progress. For want of time, however, I am compelled to omit this portion of my remarks.

To present even a general outline of the important improvements effected in Medicine, since the days of Sydenham, would oppress your patience. Taking the publication of a work on Anatomy in the 16th century, by Vesalius, as our starting point, the Healing Art has progressed towards a wonderful perfection. Structures invisible to the naked eye are dissected, understood, and described with perfect accuracy, and their various uses ascertained. Physiology, in embodying, investigating, and classifying the phenomena, conditions, and laws, which characterize and govern life and living beings, has furnished a key and an explanation to many of the secrets of Nature, and thrown valuable light on Pathology, Hygiene, Therapeutics, and other collateral branches of Medicine.

Materia Medica has been purified of many of its disgusting and inert remedies. The complex Mithridatic formula has given place to the simple prescription of one or two articles, whilst by the aid of practical Chemistry, as applied to Pharmaceutical purposes, medicines are given in a concentrated form, and thus rendered much less offensive to the patient.

Chemistry has given up its fruitless search for the arcana of life, and applied itself to more rational pursuits; earth has been called upon to yield her hidden treasures; ocean and the watery world have been searched for their products; the vegetable kingdom,

from the majestic forester to the lowly shrub, has been scanned ; the animal creation, from the insects which live in mid-air, to the fishes that swim in the great deep, and the animals that roam the forest—all have been subjected to the crucible of the Chemist, and their useful medicinal properties isolated and appropriated : whilst the electric fluid which flashes from the near cloud, has been condensed in a manageable form and made subservient to man's physical infirmities.

The ætiology of disease has completely vanquished the superstitious notion of its divine origin, and built up the science of Hygiene, whose benign influence is felt over the civilized world. Through the study of Physiology, Pathology, and Pathological Anatomy, the diagnosis of disease has become an easy matter to the educated Physician, and the exclusive humoral pathology which characterized all the works of the ancients, has been consigned to the tomb of its fathers, where sleep the thousand follies which these improvements in Medicine have exposed.

With the aid of all these lights, added to the laborious trains of thought of the clinical practitioner, it is unnecessary to say that the Theory and Practice of Medicine has approached a degree of certainty, which could scarcely have been dreamed of a few centuries ago ; whilst the operative branches, Surgery and Obstetrics, have been advanced in a corresponding ratio. By aid of the recent discoveries of Anæsthetic agents, the Surgeon's knife has lost its pain, and one of the decrees of Heaven, as to the circumstances which should attend man's advent into this world, has been robbed of, at least, some of its harshness.

Nor, in the progress of the science of Medicine, have its improvements benefitted the healing art alone. The moral and social condition of man has been much promoted by its facts and discoveries. The science of the Law, especially Legal Jurisprudence, as well as Political Economy, Agriculture, the Arts and Manufactures, have borrowed its light and been benefitted by its truths.

Apart from every other fact, the simple circumstance that Medicine has laid almost all branches of science under contribution to advance its intelligence and mature its skillfulness, is sufficient evidence of its high claim to superiority of position, as well as of its adaptations to the necessities of progressive civilization. The material interests of our nature are indeed its chief concern, and in respect of them, it stands side by side with all efforts of general

science or individual art, to meliorate the condition of humanity. It is in that field, where it has won enduring trophies—a field that Providence has assigned to genius, study, and observation, to ascertain hidden laws, and appropriate to itself the reserved energies of omnipotent Nature. To confine ourselves to such an external view of our Profession, were indeed folly. It is intimately and inseparably allied with Spiritual science, with the philosophy of intellect, with the mysterious relations of mind and matter, with all the wonders of which outward things are only the faint symbols; and therefore do we point with honest pride to the men, who, in these associate departments of great thought and vast discovery, have so signalized the name of our Profession. Can the artist ever forget his obligations to Sir Charles Bell? or the student of metaphysics the name of Abercrombie? Can general readers overlook the names of Warren, Rush, and Combe? Will the Christian forget the service of Galen in dissipating the mists of pagan idolatry, or pass without emotion the names of Avenbrøge, Borehaave, and Haller? Can the philanthropist and moralist recall, without feelings of gratitude, the names of Tribunus, Ingrassia, and Arbuthnot, or suppress a sigh in remembrance of the fate of that galaxy of kindred spirits, who, in all ages have been seen amid disease and death, immolating their own lives in the hope of alleviating the sufferings of man? The wonders of Galvanism were first indicated in the study of a Professor of Anatomy, at Bologna, and the mighty genius of Sir Humphrey Davy took its first impulse over the pestle and mortar of a drug store.

The advocates of Medical reform, in enforcing their views, have recently assumed that the Profession of Medicine has degenerated. A special charge is made against the Professors of our Medical Colleges, who, it is affirmed, are better guardians of their sordid interests, than protectors of the honor and dignity of their science. That individuals occasionally receive diplomas from some of these Institutions, who do not merit them, is obvious; but is this the rule or the exception? If it is their ordinary course of procedure, let them be assailed. If, however, it is only the exception, why cast such an indiscriminate censure over those who constitute the brightest ornaments of our Profession? There may be some decaying fruit upon the tree, but why reject the ripe growth of summer warmth and autumn fullness? Whoever observes the character and success of the Profession, as organized and operative in

our day, can hardly avoid the conclusion that any given number of young men, who now graduate in the United States, are better qualified than the same number were in any preceding year.

He who is disposed to doubt that rapid advances have been made in the facilities for imparting instruction, by the Medical Colleges in the United States, for the last fifty years, may read with much satisfaction a valedictory address, delivered by Prof. Caldwell, to the graduating class of the Medical department of the University of Louisville, in March, 1849. Prof. C. is a living chronicler of the transactions of the Medical Profession, for upwards of half a century, in which he has mingled freely during the whole of that time, and now, as with the voice of another age, he speaks of the mode of teaching Medicine practiced in the old school of Philadelphia as far back as the year 1792, being himself at that time a member of her class. No unprejudiced mind can read this account, without being satisfied that much of what has been said recently in relation to our Medical Schools, are untruths. In many parts of Europe, especially in France, the Medical Profession has taken a much higher rank in the last few years, than it ever held before, both as regards the estimation in which the science is held and the social position of its members. Look, too, at home, in our own State. When did Alabama ever possess a more zealous and intelligent Faculty? and when did she ever contribute so largely to the Medical literature of the Union, as she has done during the last few years? One fact should set this subject to rest. The various tests of a Profession must all yield in their clearness of indication and satisfactoriness of proof to the criterion established by its literature. The amount of wisdom and skill in any Profession, will always be developed in this form, for it is in this way that the finest minds naturally seek for their expression. It is here that the results of patient labor and analytic investigation are recorded; here the hand of industry arranges and unites facts; here the strength of genius and the resources of learning mutually blend and mutually exalt. Looking at our subject in this light, the most prejudiced mind should acknowledge that the literature of our Profession, for the first time in its history, now exhibits thoroughness, generalness, and profundity; in a word, that it now represents a Profession whose vocation it is to know Nature in all her forms, and minister to her in all her derangements.

We are aware that in the face of all the brilliant achievements

in Medicine, there is still much skepticism in regard to its merits, and the question as to whether or not the science has been a blessing to mankind, has been of late seriously entertained. Let us see whether or not it is a chimerical science without any claim to the high position which we assign it. Now, it is sometimes difficult for us to estimate the agency of remedies in curing individual diseases, but there are statistics of a general character, which we think settle the question most conclusively: For instance, it is stated that, in the 16th century, in the city of Geneva, (which, I believe, was the place where records of mortality were first kept,) one out of every twenty-five inhabitants died annually. At the present time the mortality is as one to forty-six; and the deaths which occurred during the period of infancy were as five formerly to one at the present date. It is ascertained, from reliable statistics, that the deaths which now occur from the perils of childbed, are less than one-half of what they were in former times, in any given number of cases. In a work on the "Hospitals and Surgeons of Paris," by F. Campbell Stewart, M. D., of New York, the author introduces a table, "showing the number of admissions and proportionate mortality" amongst the patients in the different hospitals in that city, for a series of years; from which it appears that in the Hotel Dieu, in 1816, the proportion of deaths to admissions was as 1 to 4.57. There was a progressive improvement up to 1834, when the proportion was as 1 to 11.03. From the same table it appears that the average sojourn in the hospital was, in 1816, 40 days, in 1834, only 19 days.

As a familiar illustration of the same fact, and a valuable one so far as it goes, we will take miasmatic fever, as it occurs in our midst, which belongs to a class of diseases that Sydenham said constituted nine-tenths of the diseases which afflict the human family, and was at one time aptly termed the "touchstone and opprobrium of Medicine." It is still our most common affliction, and but for the means which the resources of the science of Medicine have developed, would, in all probability, be amongst our most fatal. Of the cases of this disease which occurred here, (in Montgomery and its vicinity,) fifteen or twenty years since, from the best information I can gather, about 5 per cent. proved fatal. In looking over my register, and those of three other Physicians of Montgomery,* I find that the whole number of cases of malarious

*Drs. Boling, Sims, and Ames.

fever (comprising intermittent, remittent, and pernicious, or congestive,) treated from June 1st, 1847, to June 1st, 1848, amounted to 1450, of which 4 proved fatal,—being between one-third and one-fourth of one per cent. of the whole number treated. Fifteen years ago our attacks of remittent fever lasted from seven to ten or twelve days. At the present date this disease is cured in three or four days, and very frequently cut short after the first or second paroxysm; and the treatment of uncomplicated intermittent fever has become so simple that it is an easy lesson for childhood.

Records of mortality are now much more generally kept over the world, and the statistics of this kind which have been gathered from different countries, show, in the aggregate, an absolute increase of 10 per cent. in the average duration of human life within the last three centuries.

These truths may be offered as substantial proofs of the fact that the Profession of Medicine has not fallen from its ancient grandeur and usefulness, whilst they should completely put to the blush those who are constantly trying to heap reproaches upon it. Sarcasm, directed against our Profession, proves nothing, except the absence of argument in him who uses it. The owl has always hooted at the sunshine, and prejudice derided the claims of truth.

The spirit of rational Medicine inculcates a comprehensive humanity and benevolence; and it is for this reason that we oppose secret nostrums and quackery in all its forms. Hence the great discoveries in the science, which would have enabled their inventors to roll in wealth, if they had been patented, have been joyfully given to the world. Vaccination, morphine, and quinine, are illustrations of this fact. The world cannot understand why Physicians oppose the administration of what *they* conceive to be good patent medicines; but they do not reflect, or are not aware of the fact, that they are the medicines which we are in the daily habit of prescribing, under their appropriate names and in their original purity, for the successful disguise and pernicious adulteration of which, the public are expected to pay so largely. The only article of any value which enters into the composition of the various patent nostrums which have been invented for the cure of ague and fever, and which have enriched so many of their unprincipled venders, is quinine, or some of the preparations of Peruvian bark; whilst those who discovered the value of this agent in the treatment of intermittent fever, perhaps felt the hard cravings of poverty, rather

than keep secret information which was of such importance to the world. It is said that ignorant patients and nurses have taken their Physician's prescription, and, by procuring a patent, amassed overwhelming fortunes.

I designed, in this place, gentlemen, to speak at some length of the certainty of Medicine: of the causes which tend to create differences of opinion among its practitioners: of the religious tendencies of the Profession of Medicine: of the humanity and benevolence of Physicians, and of the services which they have rendered in the advancement of civilization. But, as I desire to dwell particularly on quackery, and some of the causes which tend to sustain and keep it alive, I feel constrained to omit my remarks in relation to these points,—fearing, even with this large pruning, I shall tire your patience.

All truth in this world seems to be subjected to trial and persecution. No sooner is any great reality presented to the confidence and veneration of mankind, than some imitative fiction attempts to usurp its place. No sooner is any system established, than it is caricatured and burlesqued. It is so in science, it is so in real life, it is so in every thing. The name of Washington was scarcely diffused throughout the world, before a host of mock-heroes brandished their swords and unfurled their banners on the field of battle; and hardly had the Redeemer left the earth, when fictitious claimants assumed the name of Messiah, and associated with themselves the sanctities of olden prophesy. The noblest sciences, however securely enthroned, have their assailants, and the holiest truths their irreverent opponents. Amid such scenes as the world exhibits, where barbarism struggles with civilization, where absolutism disputes the excellency of republicanism, and where even idolatry or atheism contends with Christianity for the mastery of the human intellect, it is surely not to be wondered at that Medicine should undergo the common experience of all great sciences, and be disciplined in the ordeals of all systems that benefit and bless the world.

Delusions have ever been springing up around the great Profession of Medicine, which, through the foulest fraud, have occasionally attained a luxuriant growth, and given a deformed aspect to our noble science. Many of these systems make out a *prima facie* case, founded generally upon some acknowledged error, abuse, or deficiency, in the science which they are designed to oppose; and,

altho' to a mind capable of analyzing their *brief*, it is plain that the abridgment of the case constitutes their strongest point, yet, in the hands of an ingenious sophist, they are made to wear an imposing aspect.

Nothing is more common than to see men prominent in public favor, espousing the cause of delusions, and lending the weight of their talents, and the force of their example, to strengthen the dominion of imposition. The associations of things always affect us. A name of merit, in any department of life, commands our homage, and the authority of genius can be transferred to nothing which it does not exalt and ennoble. It is by such influences that the appropriate sphere of the true Physician is invaded, and his just position denied him. *Persons*, in this strange world, frequently have more power than either *truth* or *fact*; and, consequently, the legitimate instrumentality of a Physician is oftener interrupted by the unwise and unjust intermeddling of others, than by any other agencies.

It is a characteristic of modern society, that it has created divisions in all labor, and assigned its respective portions to distinct classes of men. It is so both with mechanical and intellectual labor. We owe every thing in recent civilization to this fortunate arrangement, and we deem it the first article in our creed of common courtesy, as well as the dearest right in the code of common justice, that each Profession be held authoritative in its own connections and prerogatives. Medical opinions, even when formed by able votaries of the science, are liable to error. Morbid manifestations assume various forms, and often require the deepest learning, the most cautious study, as well as the most matured and discriminating judgment, to detect their real nature and devise appropriate means for their removal. Can any thing, then, be more unwise, or more unphilosophical, than for persons of general intelligence and culture to assume the province of judges and advisers on such intricate subjects? We protest against this practice, now too common, as a serious and unauthorized invasion of the acknowledged rights of Professional life, as most wofully fatal to the true progress of knowledge and science, as well as to the dearest interests of society.

But how are we to reclaim men from such error and interference? This, indeed, is a most difficult task. Their minds have not had the training of a Medical education, and they are not in

possession of even the most elementary truths, which might enable them to comprehend the legitimate reasoning of sound Medical philosophy, or aid them, on the other hand, in detecting the errors and falsehoods of the cunningly devised theory which bolsters up this or that Medical delusion. What we know to be perfectly impossible, from our knowledge of the well-established laws of Nature, they often conceive to be quite probable. Men whose opinions or judgment we would value highly on any of the ordinary affairs of life; men who are distinguished for their good sense and philanthropy, and their liberal and enlightened views concerning most subjects, and who are *deeply learned* in all that pertains to their own calling, are generally profoundly ignorant of all the requisites necessary to a just and enlightened view of ours. They know nothing of the difficult and complex study of Anatomy; they understand nothing of Physiology, or the laws which govern the operations of the animal economy; and, though these may be as immutable as any of the laws of Nature, they have not learned and they cannot appreciate them. Yet it is true that such men often *lead* public opinion in matters directly affecting the science of Medicine, —a circumstance which should flatter their vanity more than their sense of propriety.

Each science has its own evidence. Each one has its own process of thought, its own modes of analysis, its own standards of results. Each one has its separate sphere and its peculiar laborers. Each one has its code of ethics, its rights, its duties, its prerogatives. We claim no aristocracy of intellect here or any where, but we do claim to be the best judges of what constitutes truth and fact in our own department of study and exertion. To be capable of an intelligent opinion on the subject of Medicine and medicinal agents, there is much more required than mere strength of talent, or even acknowledged genius. It is not endowment, it is not talent, it is not literature, that makes the Physician. It is long and patient observation in applying and modifying the results of study, it is close contact with disease, it is unceasing mental excitement in pursuing the obscure windings of morbid influences, in the midnight hour, in solitary chambers, or in the deep reflectiveness of office-solitude, that enables him to form the data for a just and philosophic practice of his art. The world believes all this of other Professions; why not of ours?—ours, on which the interests of life and death are so often suspended.

A glance at the history of some of these systems of empiricism, or Medical mountebanks, is sufficient to convince us that they have oftener involved in their trammels men high in the estimation of the world than perhaps any others. We could offer many proofs in confirmation of this assertion. The no less celebrated than vain Medical pretender, Uranius, imposed upon the monarch of Persia (Chosroës,) the belief that he was one of the wisest and most learned philosophers who had ever visited his court. The notorious quack, Borri, so fully impressed Queen Christina with the belief that he possessed the secret of the philosopher's stone, that she exhausted all her means in administering to his extravagance. He also successfully practiced the same deception on the King of Denmark. The efficacy of the royal touch in the cure of scrofula, was acknowledged by most of the dignitaries of England and France, and Lord Bacon, with all his wisdom and philosophy, believed in the influence of charms and amulets. We might add to these the *cures* of Sir Valentine Greatrakes, the tar-water of Bishop Berkley, and the sympathetic powder of Sir Kenelm Digby,—all of which were no less the fashion and rage in their day with princes and nobles, than was the vulgar doctrine of the vaunting St. John Long, of a more recent date.

Such facts, whilst it is not contended that they prove any thing directly supporting the truth of our doctrines, at least establish, pretty conclusively, the fact that men may be wise and just princes, proud and wealthy lords, right-reverend and pious ministers of the Gospel, sagacious and eminent statesmen, and shrewd and wily lawyers, and yet fail to be the best possible judges of a Medical doctrine.

So has it ever been, and so, perhaps, it will long be in every thing. We mistake the world if we suppose that talents and learning shield their possessors from superstition and deception. The profound observation of Dugald Stewart, that *mathematicians, accustomed to exact reasoning, were the easiest deluded of all persons, on other subjects*, applies to every relation of intellect, and to every department of life.

Systems of Medical delusion are still flourishing among us. In our own day we have witnessed the birth, premature growth, and timely death, in our State, of Steam, or Thompsonism. Hydropathy has not yet reached us in a systematic shape, but is nearing our confines, whilst Homœopathy has lifted its banner of "*similia*

similibus curantur," in our midst. As this latter system is finding some favor among us, I propose to make a few very brief remarks upon it, but do not intend any thing like a critical analysis, which indeed I have neither time or inclination to bestow.

Homœopathy proclaims as the only fundamental basis in Medicine, the principle of "*similia similibus curantur*." This, in reality, is but a lesser fragment of the stupendous labors of the sage of Cos—recognized as a fact or principle of limited application in rational Medicine, and practiced upon, so far as it was valuable, since about the 90th Olympiad. Worthless as a general principle, though we regard it, it was not, nevertheless, original with Hahnemann, except in the absurd and ridiculous importance which he has given it. Among other cardinal points—that seven-eighths of all chronic diseases are caused by the itch, (Psora,)—that Nature never cures a disease, etc.—comes the grand and novel doctrine of *infinitesimal doses*. That a substance, nothing in itself, (at least so in our estimation,) a grain of oyster-shell, or charcoal, may, with a substance confessedly inert, be so blended, diluted, attenuated, shaken, or levigated, and divided into inconceivable portions, that it will at length develope or attain a strength so subtle that the most minute portion of it is capable of making a sensible and powerful impression upon the animal constitution. The power of the insignificant is admitted to be great. Among the wonders of modern chemistry, nothing is better sustained by proof, or more amply exemplified by illustrations, than the sublime truth, that in the hands and by the laws of the Omnipotent Creator, the most trifling means are made adequate to the grandest results. Masses of lime-rock we know to have been formed by immense accumulations of minute insects, and vast islands often rest on the labors of the tiny coral. We can here, however, trace most distinctly and regularly the operation of cause and effect. We can number the ages, by the data of geology, consumed in these formations, and observe the consequences of almost unlimited accumulation. The philosophy of Homœopathy presents no such relation and offers no such connection. It pretends to powerful effects, to sudden revolutions in the animal economy, to unexampled triumphs of art over diseased and decaying Nature; and when interrogated for adequate means to warrant such prodigious results, it assumes the sobered demeanor of a sage, and offers the millionth part of a grain of an inert substance as its agent. Tell us, gentlemen, after that, that the huge

masses of the Pyramids were piled amid Egyptian sands by infants, and that an idiot discovered the Newtonian system of the universe and elaborated the intricacies of the steam engine.

Rational methods of philosophy are every where based on the same general principles. Medicine is no exception to the established system of Baconian induction. If the mode of argument, constituting the essence of Homœopathy, be transferred to other subjects and carried out in daily life, there must surely be an end of all investigation ; for the mind is put by it in such a position as to be uncontrolled by all scientific connection of cause and effect.

The fanciful assumption that the more we dilute a substance and destroy and lose its material parts, the more we develop its "dynamic force" and increase its medicinal powers, may, perhaps, carry conviction to a mixture of very enlightened ideality and credulity, which we sometimes find in our *savans* ; but the falsehood of this and the kindred propositions which go to make up the so-called system, is addressed so forcibly to common sense, that I think we will not be presuming too much in taking as granted that by far the greater number of converts to Homœopathy are made by its *reported cures*. And it is for the purpose of exhibiting the occasional felicities of the merest empiricism, and of showing the ease with which proof of this kind may be arrayed in support of the grossest delusion, as well as the insufficiency of such evidence to establish of itself the validity of a Medical doctrine, that I shall make the few following remarks. I propose to demonstrate by past experience, that facts of this kind may be accumulated with great facility, and from the most respectable sources, in support of the most worthless empirical schemes.

With this view I will take up a few of the Medical heresies which have preceded Homœopathy, and which are now admitted by all to belong properly and justly under the opprobrious head of quackery, but which were once even more popular, and susceptible of much higher proof, than this system,—so far, at least, as the number of *reported cures* may be considered as contributing to this end. For this purpose I have selected three out of a vast number of the kind, viz : the Royal Gift of Healing, the Sympathetical Cures, and Metallic Tractors, or Perkinism. [SEE APPENDIX.]

I am sorry, gentlemen, that my time will not admit of reading the historical facts which I have accumulated in relation to these subjects,—especially so, as their omission will interrupt somewhat

the thread of my remarks. I must proceed, however, with the supposition that they are familiar to you all.

Such is a brief and very imperfect enumeration* of the vast amount of "facts," in the form of cures, reported by men of high literary, scientific, and political distinction, which, amid all the light of Christianity and science, rendered formidable Medical delusions as gross and contemptible as any that ever marked the darkest days of superstition and barbarism. Alas! for that word "FACTS"! It is indeed a potent word, but, in our modern vocabulary, what is it? Ghosts are facts to some, but sunshine never shone on ghosts, and midnight always wraps them and the—*facts*. Comets portended wars—was a "fixed fact" for centuries; but unfortunately science became too wise for the omen, and comets turned from prophets into things. It is a most accommodating name, as it will humor any whim or subserve any conceit. One man makes it an *ignis-fatuus*. One stamps it on an invention of perpetual motion; a second on a huge air-carriage that is to navigate the atmosphere; a third on the certainties of Millerism and the immediate end of the world; and the sad inmates of Lunatic Asylums finish the list, and, in virtue of the all-redeeming force of fact, claim the homage of kings and queens! It is a great *hobby* indeed; and some men seem born, (to vary the figure of Walpole,) "booted and spurred" to ride it—to death.

Of such is Homœopathy. Among the many false and puerile systems of Medical charlatandy which have been devised by man in his darkest hours of cupidity and avarice,—which have bewildered and perplexed the credulous invalid, and captivated and blinded the over-learned out of the Profession,—we regard this as the most ridiculous and absurd, as well as the most fantastic and worthless fabrication ever yet devised. The systems of Medicine practiced by the priests in ancient times, show us the powerful influence which the imagination possesses over disease. The folly of Sir Kenelm Digby dates the correct appreciation of the principle of union by the first intention, and led John Hunter to comprehend and elaborate the doctrines of adhesion. The history of Paracelsus, that impious charlatan and pioneer in chemistry, is an example of the fact that the minds of bold and crazy empirics have sometimes fostered the germs of important discovery, which have

*Reference is here made to the APPENDIX.

afterwards been matured by patient and philosophic observers. And thus by many other systems of Medical quackery and farrago of remedies, our Profession, never too obstinate to

“Gather gear by ev’ry wile
That’s justified by honor,”

has searched out the grain of wheat, and been the recipient of the little of good that has occasionally resulted from the folly of those who, in different ages, have attempted its subversion. I would fain think so of Homœopathy; I would fain believe that, under an exterior of falsehood and deception, it yet conceals some precious jewel—some latent principle, which, in the hands of rational cultivators of the science of Medicine, may yet prove a blessing to humanity. But, too much I fear, that, when it has had its brief race and its tale is told, it will be placed on a parallel with talismans, charms, Perkinism, and the hundred other exploded Medical delusions which have disgraced human comprehension, and be remembered only as one of the follies of the nineteenth century, without leaving a single truth to compensate for the mass of error and skepticism which it has disseminated in regard to rational Medicine.

If I am asked here if I have submitted Homœopathy to the test of experiment, I answer *no*; and for two reasons. I maintain that a Physician cannot conscientiously tamper with the lives of his fellow-creatures, in experimenting with any system which has falsehood so legibly imprinted on its front. And, secondly, Homœopathy has been subjected to trial and experiment by a few of the most distinguished members of our Profession, who, having the most ample opportunities for testing its value, arising from their connection with large hospitals, (where, from some cause or other, human life is not estimated so highly as with us,) submitted it to the most exact and rigorous experiment. Among those who fully and fairly experimented with it, and stated their sincere convictions of the utter worthlessness of its doctrines and nullity of its remedies; were Esquirol, Andral, and Baillie,—men known over the civilized world, and whose fame extends wherever learning is appreciated or science has a home.

It has been suggested by some of our Profession, that, as it had long been a desideratum in Therapeutics, to ascertain how far the unassisted powers of Nature were competent for the removal of disease; and, as the conscientious Physician was debarred from making this experiment, as well by his own code of morals as by

the requirements of society, that Homœopathy might, in this way, make some developments, which, in the end, would prove beneficial to our science. But this experiment has been made, time after time, not only by the advocates of some of the systems of delusion which have been conceived and practiced, but also by Broussais and his followers, who were, at least, intelligent and qualified observers.

But even suppose, in the face of the investigations of the distinguished personages just alluded to, (who, though not pledged to the system, divested themselves of every thing like bias or prejudice, save that which will naturally cling to the mind in entertaining a proposition so utterly opposed to common sense and common reason,) that a necessity for an experiment of the kind did still exist, could we hope the friends of Homœopathy would make it with a true and honest spirit of enquiry? Could we hope that the truths of this character, which it might develope, would ever be faithfully and fairly stated by them? On the contrary do we not see a spirit of party-warfare pervading all their acts, and the feeling of deception and fraud so prominent as not to escape the notice of the most superficial observer? From the little practical details which we have been permitted to witness, we cannot refrain the belief that it is not practiced with the desire, if indeed with the ability, in many instances, to determine any important fact. Have we not seen them, with venal designs too obvious, shrouding their cases in false colors; torturing disease into being whatever it was believed would give the Physician most eclat in case the patient recovered; calling simple hysteria "*brain fever*," and naming mild bronchitis "*pneumonia*," at a time when these latter affections were prevailing, and looked upon with much gravity by the scientific Physician? It is not necessary for us to see their cases to know they are misrepresenting them. When we hear it circulated that such an individual, dangerously ill of pneumonia in the second or third stage, or any other disease involving organic lesion to the same extent, was cured in "fifteen minutes," or *fifteen hours* after the administration of the first globule or drop, we want no higher evidence of its falsehood than the simple statement of the "fact." From our knowledge of diseases, of their morbid anatomy, and of the time which Nature requires to repair her injuries, we know that such statements are inconsistent with her order, and cannot possibly be true. But, thus

"The whole ear of Denmark
Is, by a forged process,
Rankly abused."

I have known little coincidences, or "Homœopathic cures," as they were termed, but really unimportant and of no force or value in fact, which, after being circulated a few days by the friends of the system, were so magnified and distorted that scarcely any of their original features could be recognized:—

"The flying rumors gather'd as they roll'd
Scarce any tale was sooner heard than told;
And all who told it added something new,
And all who heard it made enlargements too;
In every ear it spread, on every tongue it grew.
Thus flying east and west and north and south,
News travel'd with increase from mouth to mouth."

It is astonishing how a certain class of the community love to aid and abet, with their fervid imaginations, these idols of the fancy, these mocking counterfeits and libels upon a system so important to the happiness of man, that it is scarcely less than sacred. We have often heard such persons make statements as to the sensible and powerful effects of the attenuated powder or drop, and as to the results of the Homœopathic treatment in the cure of specified diseases, of which they themselves, perhaps, had been the subjects; but, from our positive knowledge of the impossibility of there being any truth in them in reality, and in order to free them from the charge of misrepresenting facts, which otherwise might follow, we have almost been tempted to hope that they had not the same "dimensions, senses, affections, passions,"—not "subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer,"—not manifesting the same phenomena, or bound by the same laws and restrictions which Nature has imposed upon ordinary mortals, and "that some of Nature's journey-men had made them, and not made them well, they imitate humanity so abominably," if we are to credit their own statements.

When, as has sometimes been the case, we have been forced to listen to the vagaries of these zealous proselytes to Homœopathy, we could not refrain the thought that it was unfortunate for the perpetuity of kindred delusions which have long since perished, that they did not live in the days of alchemy, of the doctrine of signatures, of amulets, of charms, or the sympathetic cures. They could then have feasted their admiring eyes upon the philosopher's stone, and, with the aid of the *elixir vitæ*, lived on to tell us of

those good old days, and marvel yet at the still greater developments of Samuel Hahneman. Without consulting books or Dutch Doctors, they could have read on every medicinal substance the disease to which it was applicable; in the coral which the fond mother still hangs round the neck of her helpless babe, (unconscious of the superstitious origin of the custom,) they could have found wonderful efficiency in portraying the phases of protean disease, and in "keeping off evil eyes and devils"; with the Druids of Gaul and Britain, they could have watched the hours of the moon, and, when it was six days old, cut the misletoe with a golden knife, as their voices made rich melody in chanting the choral hymns, or resounding through the groves the mystic chorus of *Der-ry down*; and, doubtless, under the direction of Sir Kenelm Digby, they could have washed their hands in the reflection of a moon-beam and found much and potent humidity therein!

Exaggeration, however, is one of the infirmities of human nature. The desire to attribute every simple and ordinary phenomenon to the operation of some wonderful and unnatural cause, is an inherent faculty of some minds, which, together with a knowledge of the extremes and errors into which an ideal and fervid imagination sometimes betray enthusiasts, may form an apology for these miraculous statements—so often in opposition to the well established laws of Nature.

The science of Medicine has had many obstacles and hinderances to its progress, and many vicissitudes of fortune. At one time the pet of monarchs and royalty; at another time its professors were banished from the classic shores of Italy, and the practice of Medicine positively prohibited in the Roman empire for a number of centuries. But, strange as it does seem, one of the greatest stumbling blocks in its path has ever been the interference and influence of the clergy. Nor need we, for proof of this, recur to the pages of fabulous history, where we gather that, after the gold had been laid upon the altar, the pain-stricken victim reposed upon the skins of sacrificed rams, that, through the intercession of the priests, they might receive heavenly visions in lieu of the anguish of disease. The clergy have ever had an "overweening desire" to dabble in the affairs of Medicine, and especially during those dismal centuries denominated the dark ages, they were not satisfied with corrupting and adulterating the doctrines of Christianity, and prostituting their own sacred calling to unholy purposes, but claim-

ed and exercised the right of practicing Medicine, which they encumbered with the vilest charlatanry, and disgraced with the grossest superstitions. Indeed, the outrages and enormities of this class of individuals had reached to such an extent in this particular, that, in the 12th century, the more liberal and enlightened of their Order thought it necessary, for the protection of the laity, to interfere and prohibit their "attendance at the bed-side of the sick, except as ministers of the consolations of religion." This right, however, they were loth to give up; for free access to the sick, and the power which the authority of the Physician, added to the terrors of the Church, gave them over the fears and apprehensions of the invalid, enabled them to enforce much more easily their pecuniary exactions. Repeated edicts of this kind were passed, and, though threatening those who should infringe them with the anathemas of the Church, they still rebelled; and, it was not until the passage of "a special bull permitting Physicians to marry," that the evil began to abate. Medicine was not entirely divorced from its pernicious union with Theology, until the revival and spread of letters. Even as late as 1518, we see the "Bishop of London and the Dean of St. Paul's possessed of the important privilege of examining and admitting Medical candidates to practice within their jurisdictions; while other Bishops claimed a similar power within their several dioceses." And the abrogation of this privilege and power, so full of danger to the community, and so fatal to the science of Medicine, was at last effected in an indirect manner, by the efforts of Linacre, who, with a view to this end, procured the establishment of the College of Physicians in London in 1518.

Although I approach with much delicacy and deep solemnity any accusation calculated to reflect discredit upon this truly noble and philanthropic class of men, yet the charge of meddling in the affairs of our calling has frequently been made against them, *even at the present day*, and I fear too often not without good grounds. Happily for both Christianity and Medicine, the two Professions have been separated; but, although the substance has been wrung from their grasp, yet, through the influence over human opinion which their talents and social position give them, the clergy still wield a shadowy scepter over the prosperity of our calling. In making these remarks, I would do violence to my own feelings were I not to state my knowledge of the fact that their interference at the present day does not arise from the same motives which

prompted those pseudo-saintly men of olden times, who, whilst they perverted and profaned the doctrines of Christianity, constituted a libel upon our science. But the fact cannot be denied that, in too many instances, it is their practice to embarrass, rather than promote our science, and to encourage the vain and insolent quack, who deserves their pious indignation more than their zealous aid. How often do we see the filthy patent nostrum rendered palatable and find ready sale by the endorsement of some minister of the Gospel? and what Medical heresy floats in the breeze, that does not find favor and patronage through the example and influence of some of these right reverend gentlemen. All this, I verily believe, is but the offspring of the purest philanthropy on their part, and the natural and instinctive desire, which every good man has, to render assistance to the suffering and afflicted; but it does appear to me that any one, who will reflect but a single instant, cannot fail to perceive that such conduct is fraught with mischief to the community, and full of injustice towards us. We would not desire to restrict them, so far as they are *individually* concerned, to any system of Medicine; neither would we have them travel out of the pale of their sacred calling to enter the personal conflicts of human affairs. We do not ask them to aid us, for we regard the holy mission, and the robes with which Heaven has clothed them, as too pure to be soiled in the advocacy or defence of any system, of the true merits of which *they are, in all probability, ignorant.*

We desire to speak with truth, and with veneration too, and thus say to these holy men of the cross, who think proper to invade our precincts: You have given us wise and friendly admonitions relative to that awful eternity beyond the grave: for this, and for your noble efforts in the cause of humanity, we esteem and venerate you. To your opinions and example the world has vouchsafed an influence in most of the affairs of life, and in the Profession of Medicine not less than any other. This Profession, you will concede, touches more immediately the temporal happiness of man than any other—your own not excepted. If you have devoted the energies of your life to the glory and advancement of that calling for which Heaven has ordained and appointed you, you cannot be presumed to be competent judges and advisers in matters pertaining to ours; and, when you come in contact with its affairs, we therefore entreat you, as you love virtue and scorn vice, to be careful how you throw the weight of your influence between the man who cultivates

it as a high and noble science, and him who fraudulently follows it as a trade. In your own families you have sometimes required our services: under such circumstances have you not always found us liberal, rendering our aid freely, without remuneration? This you had no right to expect, any more than that the carpenter should build your house free of charge, for the principle that the laborer is worthy of his hire, is as applicable to Physicians as any other class of men. Of this we do not complain, but recur to it only as showing an *elevated spirit* in the Profession. It is a custom, grown into law by long usage, and we trust it will long continue prominent among the many other features which dignify our code of ethics. Often we have met: sometimes in the business pursuits of life, sometimes in our social intercourse with the world; but, oftentimes we have met around the sick bed, or the couch of death—amid the anguish of the dying and the lamentations of grief. Sometimes in the palace of wealth, it is true, where the victim of disease was surrounded with the “embroidered pillow and the purple canopy,” and every luxury which wealth could command; but, often we have greeted each other in the lowly and comfortless hovels of poverty, where we had gone—we to “blunt the arrow of death,” you to administer a sacrament to the soul,—under circumstances which could promise no other compensation to either of us, than the approval of that conscience which whispers to us in our retirement and solitude, “well done thou good and faithful servant.” From all this you should learn that as it requires, to be successful in the treatment of the spiritual diseases of man, a *singleness* of purpose, so also, to be competent in the management of his temporal ailments, requires more study and observation than your leisure should have permitted you to bestow.

Thus much, I hope we may be permitted to say in opposition to what we believe to be an error of many of the clergy—an error of “the head—not of the heart.” We have often listened to reproof from them. Seldom have we indulged in censure.

There is another class of men, who occasionally distract public opinion in regard to the value of rational Medicine, by being found advocating some of these popular humbugs. These are known by the very imposing title of “*retired Physicians*”! Men who have come into the ranks of Medicine, shared its honors and reaped its rewards—perhaps without deserving either; men, who, probably through the force of circumstances, cunning and chicanery, have

cheated a community into patronage and confidence, and who, after gathering enough of this world's goods, have retired from its precincts, and, viper-like, turned and stung her whose breast had warmed and nurtured them into existence. Oh ! I have been pained to hear such men laughing at, jeering and ridiculing their old Profession, in public places, and calling its operation "murderous," (and perhaps it may have been in their hands.) Much importance is attached, by the non-Medical public, to the opinions of such men. But, to one *competent* to judge, I imagine it would not be difficult, in most instances, to discover that they are as deficient in Medical knowledge, as they are in moral principle ; that they only gathered, or had *ground* into them, sufficient to enable them to procure a diploma, or license to practice, without ever comprehending the truths or principles of their Profession ; that, in its practical discharge, they did not observe with a view of enriching a noble science, or adding a superstructure to the foundation which they had but imperfectly laid ; and, when at last they retired from a sphere for which they had never been qualified—taking with them only the name, the errors, and the vices of an honorable Profession, without any of its virtues or embellishments,—perhaps we should not marvel at their adoption of any species of quackery, however absurd. But it is hard to abide the conduct of such men with any thing like patience, and we are insensibly led to ask them—have you read the oath of Hyppocrates, or the ethics of Percival ? In taking leave of this part of our subject, we would recommend for the perusal and moral reflection of such, a few of the verses found in the latter part of the 9th chapter of Genesis, in that good book, the Bible,—particularly in reference to the conduct of Ham, when he discovered the temporary nakedness and weakness of his father, the Patriarch Noah, and went about laughing to his brethren without,—as compared to that of Shem and Japhet, who, feeling a proper filial regard for him to whom they were bound by the tenderest ties and deepest obligations, "took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backwards and covered the nakedness of their father." We would also ask them to note the consequent rewards and punishments of the several sons.

The world is frequently misled in regard to the merits of our science, by the conduct of what *they* term "distinguished Physicians"—still engaged in the practical discharge of their Profession. Now, we are frequently told, as a proof of the merits of some of

these delusions, that Physicians of eminence have become converts to them. True, the Royal Touch, Metallic Tractors, and many delusions of our own day, have boasted among their converts "distinguished Physicians." No wonder! Judus Iscariot betrayed his Lord, for thirty pieces of silver. The American Revolution had its "distinguished" General Benedict Arnold; Paradise had its wily serpent, and Heaven its rebellious Satan. Men have proclaimed themselves heralds of the cross of Christ, and, through their treachery, have brought odium upon their holy calling; and who has not heard that it is sometimes true, that lovely woman is wooed and won, and then abandoned by the heartless wretch, when he has wasted her once too alluring gold? "Distinguished Physicians" have not, in every instance, as much practice as they would like, and are not always entirely free from moral obliquities:—we have shown, too, how Medical humbugs occasionally infatuate and craze communities, and that quacks are sometimes very formidable rivals; and,

"When thus ripe lies are to perfection sprung,
Full grown, and fit to grace a *Doctor's* tongue,"

it should not be matter of very great astonishment, if they should sometimes

—"Crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning;"

affect to change their opinions, and to become converts to one of these delusions; coin a smile, to approve the insane absurdities of an Organon; drown rational Medicine in the watery vagaries of an ignorant German peasant, and, with the earnestness of a Mussulman, "cry aloud in worship of a"—'pathy? Or, with wisdom and discretion, announce themselves ready to "take truth wherever they can find it," and proclaim to the world "we'll combine the two, and take the GOOD of ALL." The brilliant halo which surrounded Napoleon, took the sycophant's blot when he worshiped at every altar, and became, at the same time, "a Mahometan, a Catholic, and a patron of the Synagogue, * * a Christian and an Infidel"! .

It is true, there are in our Profession, as in all others, men of gross and sensual minds, of sordid and selfish views; men of dark and crooked councils,—calm-thinking, calculating sycophants, whom no faith can fix in opposition to their *interest*. Such men may sometimes obtain distinction, but, in any event, are always

willing to cringe and cater to public prejudices, and will advocate the vilest falsehood, provided their coffers are more easily filled by so doing. Various, indeed, is the moral constitution of man, and dark and fearful the depravity of the heart to which it sometimes leads. One would think, however, that this moral abandonment, as it raised the curtain of misery and death, to feed its avaricious propensities amid the last and saddest scenes in human life, would pall before spectacles so subduing, that the blackest turpitude and most profligate avarice might borrow from them a momentary feeling of pity and tenderness; and thus beguile themselves, at least, into a temporary virtue. But once they have taken up this calling, for selfish and unholy purposes, no picture can affright and no moral consideration can awe them. The presence of the Lord in the garden of Eden could not restrain the entrance of the Tempter!

The practice of one of these Medical delusions, by a Physician who believes it to be such, we regard as one of the grossest of all vices. The muffled assassin, whose hands are dripping with the blood of murdered innocence, steals upon his slumbering and unconscious victim under the shades of midnight, and conceals his dagger of death under his mantle, but carries not upon his lips in syren songs the delusive promises of health and security!

Such perversions of the true and legitimate objects of our Profession, gentlemen, should only cause us to form amongst ourselves the "cognate habit of despising" the low, the hollow, and the tricky; and excite us to resist, with an honorable solicitude for the dignity, usefulness and well-being of our science, all attempts to mingle with it any of those delusions which have been conceived in fraud and practiced with deception,—“to stand aloof, at a far distance, from the very appearance of tampering with such unholy aidences. ‘To act in the spirit of science where I can, by the mere light of experience, without scientific insight, where I must; but with the uniform avoidance and contempt of quackery in all cases.’ This is, or ought to be, the moral code of every Medical practitioner.”

But, gentlemen, we need not repine at such things. Truth, even when clothed in its highest graces and embellishments, has not always escaped the assaults of the world. Great sciences, as well as great men, have ever been subjected to severe trials. So true is this, that it has almost grown into a proverb, that “in much

wisdom there is much grief," and that "adversity is the only school in which genius and virtue are permitted to take their highest degrees." Were we not made to be tried? Is there any sentiment, principle, or affection of our nature, that knows not this all-pervading law, and will not eventually glory in this all-ennobling experience? The martyrs of science and truth have, in all ages, and in all lands, made science and truth what they are; and it is our part to suffer, that we may learn our strength and realize our power. Delusions and impostors have always had their friends and advocates. But, wherever found, and however operative, it is consoling to remember that quackery, like all other species of demagoguism, belongs to the things that float in the air, but fix not upon the rock. It makes no appeal to what is permanent in our being. It cannot have an enthronement in the upper firmament. It is too short-sighted to see its own policy, and too narrow-hearted to feel its own defects. It may worship Neptune on the sea, Pluto in the bowels of the earth, or Jupiter in the upper regions, but even idolatry scorns a divided heart, and abhors the treachery of a time-serving offering. It may cry "hosanna" to-day, and "crucify him" to-morrow, but the words perish in the foul atmosphere that breeds them. It may pander to the grosser passions, but it is the everlasting law that passion should recoil in fiery vengeance on whatever has descended to its own level and polluted itself in its own corruptions. The time-serving of Napoleon met its reward at the battle of Waterloo, and on the dreary rock of St. Helena; remorse for treachery planted in the bosom of Judas his own sword, and retributive Heaven directed the lightning's stroke to the tomb of Arnold.

No, gentlemen, we need not repine. The impure exhalations may rise from the earth and obscure the sunshine; the landscape may darken, and the sky be covered with gloom; but the same cloud holds the electricity, that shall soon dart its vivid lightnings and burst its heavy folds. It is so with truth and error. The one is omnipotent: the other feeble. The one is immortal: the other perishable. Wherever there is a great thought, a just philosophy, a rational science, the interests of humanity are united with it, and Heaven will see that its foundations shall not be overthrown, nor its utility permanently invaded. Thus with rational Medicine.—When the evanescent excrescences, which spring up around it, shall have perished and passed from the memory of man, it will

still stand—an emblem of virtue, to wisdom a monument, for humanity at once a beacon and a trophy.

“Fond impious man! think ye yon sanguine cloud
Raised by your breath, hath quenched the orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs his golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.”

Now, gentlemen, addressing myself exclusively to the junior members of the Association, allow me to remark: You have attached your fortunes to a noble Profession, but, at the same time, an exacting one;—one that requires all your affections, all your attentions, and the best and highest exercise of your talents; but one, also, that will fully reward you for all your toil and labor.—But, gentlemen, if you are ambitious of public applause, and frequent popular tributes of respect, in this you will generally be disappointed. Your paths will not be strewn with flowers, and your highest and worthiest intellectual efforts and triumphs, as well as your best deeds, will generally remain concealed from the world at large. The life of a Physician, however wise, is always quiet and peaceful, and generally obscure. It is not like that of the orator and statesman, who, in recounting the deeds of illustrious ancestry, and alluding to the heritage of national honor and glory, inflames the feelings of patriotism, and fires and moves with his passionate eloquence the popular masses: or the poet, whose tender and melting strains of thought, woven into harmonious verse with the richest and choicest language, charm the sense, enchant the ear, and fill the heart with the most touching and intense emotions. These are but some of the pleasures and pastimes of an intellectual life,—they flatter pride and gratify ambition, without the toils which we endure, or the unpleasant scenes which we witness. Neither is it like that of the military chieftain who carries his armed legions to battle, and revels in victory, though it be over the gory bodies of a thousand slain of his fellow beings. This is the “pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war”! This the world calls greatness! This the world calls glory! This, the world says, “makes ambition virtue”! For this the gaudy pageant moves, the triumphal car is decked, and the voices of millions unite in songs of praise to the heroes of Marengo and Waterloo. Not so with the Physician, gentlemen. He goes forth to battle against disease, which in itself is repugnant to his sight, and leaves no pleasant reminiscences with the patient or friends. His march is often lonely, and perchance amid the perils of a stormy and star-

less night. His victory may be signal and complete, yet success on his part does not erect the triumphal arch, or swell the bosom of the multitude. His victories are the peaceful triumphs of observation and reason. His trophies are the heralds of health, and the subjugation of the common enemy of man. His rejoicing is the lulled pain, the returning bloom of a wan and hollow cheek, and the voice of gratitude. These, though noiseless, are grateful emblems to him,—they gratify his highest aspirations.

Let your labor, gentlemen, be “a labor of love,” and believe me, it will be no difficult task to read your ultimate destiny and final reward. Few, if any of you, are so poor or humble as many who have risen by their patient labor in the fields of Medicine to the highest ranks in society. Remember Winther, familiarly known in his early youth as the “beggar of Deventer,” who, through his own unaided merit, rose from the humblest walks in life to the highest distinction. Conrad Gesner, too, who was so humble as to commence life in the capacity of a menial servant, but by his own labor was justly regarded, before the days of Linnaeus, as the father of systematic Botany. The great Dupuytren was “compelled, from poverty, to trim his students’ lamp with oil from the dissecting room”; and most of the eminent living surgeons of France have “succeeded without friends, interest, or pecuniary assistance, in attaining enviable positions among the scientific men of Europe.” The distinguished Civiale, Roux, and Velpeau, “rose from the lowest depths of poverty by dint of their own unfriended application,”—the latter of whom, independent of his arduous practical duties, is said to have supplied, up to his 46th year, the almost incredible amount of “more than twenty-five thousand pages for the press.”

These examples, and numberless others of a like character, are familiar to you all, and need not be referred to by me as worthy of your emulation. Recent demonstrations tell me you are not wasting your time by the way-side, but that your hours are devoted to the cultivation and improvement of your Profession: the present occasion, and the large audience of Physicians before me, speak a kindling zeal in its behalf; and I hope to see the day when, through your efforts, the Profession of Medicine in our State will stand second to none other in the scale of social and intellectual rank. Even now “methinks I see her as an eagle, mewing her mighty youth and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day

beam, purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain of heavenly radiance,—while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about amazed at what she means.”

In the exercise of your Profession you probably have, and will continue to meet with the unjust censure and ingratitude of those who are incapable of properly appreciating your services ; and possibly the worldly returns which it may make you, will be inadequate to your bodily toil and mental anxiety. Indeed this is altogether likely ; for the world has but a very limited conception of the amount of mental anguish and suffering which we endure, when it presumes that we can be compensated for it independent of their sympathy of feeling and friendship. The life of a Physician is one of peculiar hardships, not always properly estimated even by those who are the recipients of its fullest beneficence. His days are spent in visiting chambers of disease and death :—sympathizing with his fellow-creatures, his heart often grows sick and faint with their suffering. He denies himself the pleasures and social enjoyments of home, kindred, and friends, to accomplish some errand of mercy. In his toil and anxieties for that of others, his own health is wasted. At night, when all others retire within the bosoms of their families, and forget the disturbing cares of business in intercourse with the dearest associates of the heart—the sweet and endearing converse with wife, and the prattling innocence and fairy enchantments of children around the knee,—he can calculate with certainty upon no such relaxation. When Sunday comes, he is not permitted to retire to his closet and spend the day in communing with his God, or to obey with regularity the mellow summons of the church bell. Truly has it been said, that

“ Even Sunday shines no sabbath day to the Physician.”

Can pecuniary compensation alone reward him for all this, without the kindness and interest of friendship and gratitude ? He who thinks so has but a very limited conception of the amount of mental endurance and anguish involved in such a life.

But, gentlemen, our life is not all a gloomy picture. It has, too, its green spots. Some of the most cherished and lasting friendships which you will ever form, will have had their beginning in a Professional intercourse ; and you will find that, amid all your hardships, and the rudeness of a few unfeeling ones, there will be many whose eyes, even in health, “ will mark your coming and

look brighter when you come" ; and who, in disease, will be lulled into quiet from your presence alone.

" At his approach complaint grew mild,
And when his hand unbarred the shutter,
The clammy lips of fever smiled
The welcome that they could not utter."

(Lines often quoted, but they never weary a Physician's ear.)
Such tokens speak to the heart—in language mute and noiseless,
but the deafest hear. When Swift bitterly complained of being ill,

" Far from his kind Arbuthnot's aid,
Who knew his *art* but not his *trade*,"

the sentiment was a welcome offering to the distinguished personage whose character it thus briefly portrayed.

There is yet a higher, a nobler, and a richer inheritance, which, for a virtuous and honorable servitude, your Profession never fails to bequeath,—*the happy consciousness of having been instruments of lessening the load of human suffering*. All your charities to the poor, and your good and benevolent deeds to mankind generally, will remain a constant source of pleasure to you in after life ; like the dew which rises from the surface of the river, and, clustering on the verdant foliage which overhangs the stream, drops again into the bosom from whence it emanated, purified by its temporary absence. It is, in itself, a purifying and ennobling Profession. This is manifested in the lofty spirit which it inspires, as we read prominent in the arch of its ambition—its highest aim, its holiest hope, the end and goal of all its aspirations—*the amelioration of human suffering* ! How pure the example of piety, how lofty the ambition which it testifies ! How bright, how beauteous, when compared to the numerous devices for the infliction of cruelty and pain which so often engage human invention !

The recollections which follow him who has pursued the Profession of Medicine with a strict adherence to the spirit which its code of ethics inculcates, must inspire old age with grateful reminiscences, and yield a full reward for the hardships and perils which were joyless and even painful at the time they were endured. When man reaches that stage of life in which ambition ceases to disturb the mind, and power, with its serfs, and sycophants, and scepters, loses its earthly interest in the contemplation of a future state ; when wealth, with its glittering symbols of pride and pomp, no longer inflates the mind with a feeling of contentment ; when

the plaudits of fame are insipid, and "all the blandishments of life are gone"; when the grave is mocking all his earthly possessions, and beckoning him on to his last and final resting place on earth,—then it is that the virtuous Physician, whose sinews have grown old and stiff in his kind ministrations to human suffering, like the "philosopher seated amid the ruins of some ancient temple, which speak that some time they were a worthy building," calmly reviews his life, and reflects with grateful pride and pleasure that he has not lived in vain; that, through his instrumentality, others have been permitted to enjoy the matchless blessing of health, and that his life has been one faithful ministry to man and God.

In this retrospect, upon his memory there comes, peradventure, the recollection of "burning sands and bitter waters"; of the ingratitude and keen injustice of friends, by whose couch he has often kept vigil, with limbs weary of much doing, and eyes heavy of long watching; sad scenes of human misery are brought to view, many of which, to his terror and warning, often called to his mind that fixed law, that frightful truth, that emblem of the appointed scheme of Nature's God—"dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return." And here, too, perchance, there comes upon his memory the recollection of that fond mother, whose child he once saw suddenly taken from her. Does he not remember how it pierced his heart, when he saw her, in her almost frantic grief, bending in tenderest affection over the little babe who had been the day-spring of her existence, bathing its bloodless cheek with her own tears, muffling her pent-up agony, as though fearful its outburst would scare the little fluttering spirit hence, and clasping its almost lifeless body as if to chain it yet longer to earth? And ah! how much was his own grief heightened, as he felt and realized that soon, instead of a mother's lap, the coffin in the lonely mansion of the grave would be its cradle, and that, instead of a mother's voice, the sad and mournful winds of Heaven would sing its nightly lullabies? And when at length, overcome by a scene so awfully, so painfully sublime, and unwilling to disturb a picture so heavenly, he turned away, does not that voice still echo in his ears, as in her wild despair she grasped his arm and imploringly cried—"oh Doctor! Doctor, do not leave me! save my child"? Such is an example of the scenes of woe, the hours of grief in which we mingle and with which we sympathize. *They leave their impress upon the heart*, and, though painful, are durable mementoes of a high and holy calling.

I see some before me whose locks are whitening for the grave,—war-worn veterans in the cause of humanity. And, methinks, I see such even now, in their contemplations, as the remembrance of some benevolent act or Professional kindness calls to their minds the acknowledgments of gratitude as they came fresh and gushing from the heart of some friendless inmate of a lowly dwelling.—How grateful to the recollection! Stealing upon the memory like some loved strain of music heard in boyhood: kindling in that old but tender heart a serene and quiet pleasure, and wooing it to forget the harshness and asperity with which similar deeds have too often been requited. From such we prefer to ask counsel, rather than give it. If they have pursued their vocation in its true spirit, a generous benevolence, an extended humanity, and a self-sacrificing charity—those vestal virtues which adorn and decorate man,—were early wedded in their bosoms, and have kindled in their hearts a mingled flame, whose rays have ever cast a pure and mellow brightness around the bed of suffering. A comfort to the rich, it has been a balm to the hearts of the poor; and, whether basking in the noontide of prosperity and affluence, or trembling in adversity and want, it has never forgotten the holy alliance which gave it birth. It now clings to the heart, illuminates the soul, and hallows the Profession which it at once typifies and venerates, and their passage to the tomb will be but the harbinger of their highest reward.

The stars that set to us rise on other lands and beautify other skies; and so, departed worth and honored genius are never lost, for they carry within themselves their own immortality.

APPENDIX.

THE Royal Gift of Healing was the birth-right of Kings, and was practiced for the cure of Scrofula, or King's Evil. It was first practiced by Edward the Confessor, King of England, who ascended the throne in 1014. This power, it was admitted, extended to the potentates of other nations, but only such as were connected with the royal family of England. The French, however, contended that this sacred privilege belonged to their Kings exclusively. Certain it is that it was practiced by the sovereigns of both nations over a period of nearly 700 years. William III discontinued the practice, but Anne resumed it.

There was but little ceremony observed on the occasion. On the patient's being presented, the sovereign touched him with his hand, and then hung a piece of gold or silver around his neck.— This completed the treatment, and generally the cure. In proof of the latter, abundant evidence like the following can be adduced :—

Jeremy Collier, when speaking of Edward the Confessor, in his *Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, says, "that this prince cured the King's Evil is beyond dispute : * * * * * To dispute the matter of fact is to go to the excesses of skepticism, to deny our senses, and be incredulous even to ridiculousness." Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury, who lived during the reign of Edward III and Richard II, in speaking of this practice, says, "Who-

ever thou art, O Christian, who denyest miracles, come and be an eye-witness of their truth." Sir John Fortescue, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench during the reign of Henry IV, and also Chancellor to Henry VI, says, "the Kings of England, at the time of unction, receive such a divine power, that by the touch of their hands they can cleanse and cure those who are otherwise considered incurable, of a certain disease, commonly called the King's Evil." The Rev. Dr. Wm. Tooker, who was chaplain to Queen Elizabeth, Canon of Exeter and Dean of Litchfield, wrote a history and defence of this power, but confined it to the English sovereigns, and extols very highly the powers of the Queen. Badger, in a report of cases of the King's Evil which were cured by the imposition of royal hands, says of Charles I, that he "excelled all his predecessors in the divine gift; for it is manifest, beyond all contradiction, that he not only cured by his sacred touch," &c.

So important was this portion of the King's duty considered, that frequent proclamations and special bulletins were issued in regard to it; and the practice of, as well as the confidence in this mode of curing the disease, was so general, that it became a work of exceeding labor to them, and they consequently generally gave notice that they would exercise this power on appointed days. In order to prevent persons from applying who were not really subjects of the disease, applicants were required to bring certificates from one of the surgeons, who had been appointed for the purpose of examining them. The surgeons also had their regular hours for making these examinations, and so great was the effort to get to their offices on such occasions, that six or seven persons were known to have been crushed to death, in the scramble, in one day. In the diary of Bishop Cartright, he says, in speaking of James II, "I attended his majesty's levee: from whence, at nine o'clock, I attended him in the choir, where he healed 350 persons"; and it is stated of one of the French Kings, Louis XIV, that he touched and cured 1600 in one day. The number of cases touched by Charles II, of England, according to a register kept by the sergeant and keeper of his closet, amounted to 92,107, and this, too, in the space of twenty years. Judging from the comparative infrequency of the disease in the present age, one would be inclined to think that this comprehended not only all of the real, as well as imaginary cases of Scrofula which occurred in his realms during this period, but also all that occurred in the world. At all events it is a pretty

good evidence of the great popularity of the practice. Indeed, so overwhelming was the cry of "cures," "cures," and the number of cases reported as such, that we find many of the Physicians withdrawing opposition to the practice, and even prescribing this as a means of cure for their patients. Perhaps the fear of royal displeasure and popular prejudice, may have extorted this acknowledgment from them. In any event it shows the mass and plausibility of the evidence which had been accumulated in its favor. William Cloves, surgeon to Queen Elizabeth, in a treatise on Scrofula, says, "it is a disease repugnant to nature : which grievous malady is known to be miraculously cured and healed by the sacred hands of the Queen's most royal majesty, even by divine interposition and wonderful works of God, above man's skill, arte and expectation. Through whose princely clemency, a mighty number of her majesty's most royal subjects, and also many strangers borne, are daily cured and healed, which otherwise would most miserably have perished."

Wiseman, a surgeon and writer of some distinction, in speaking of the King's Evil, says "I myself have been a frequent eye-witness of many hundreds of cures performed by his majesty's touch alone, without any assistance of chirurgery : and those, many of of them, such as had tyred out the endeavours of able chirurgeons before they came thither. It were endless to recite what I myself have seen, and what I have received acknowledgments of by letter, not only from the several parts of this nation, but also from Ireland, Scotland, Jersey, and Guernsey. * * * * I must confess that what I write will do little more than show the weakness of our ability when compared with his majesty's, who cureth more in any one year than all the chirurgeons of London have done in an age."

Evidences of this kind could be multiplied without number, but it is thought that enough has been said to prove that this means of treating Scrofula obtained a high reputation by the number of cures which it was said to have performed. The practice continued for a considerable portion of the 18th century, and Dr. Samuel Johnson, known to you all as the distinguished lexicographer and moralist, was "cured" of Scrofula, it was said, when about five years of age, by the imposition of the hands of Queen Anne. On the same day that he was "cured," she touched two hundred other persons for the same disease.

It is strange, however, when stated in connection with the gen-

eral resort to this *sovereign* remedy, and in the face of all these reputed cures, that more persons died of Scrofula during the reign of Charles II, (who practiced this "divine gift" more extensively than any other monarch,) than in any other period embracing the same length of time.

The *Sympathetical Cures* were practiced more extensively in the reigns of James I and Charles I. There were two different modes of conducting this practice. One was the Sympathetic Powder of Sir Kenelm Digby, the secret of which he obtained from a Carmelite Friar, who had been an extensive traveller, and obtained his knowledge of this wonderful remedy during his peregrinations in the East. This Friar was much disposed to keep his knowledge a secret still, having resisted the entreaties of the Grand Duke of Florence; but the versatile Knight succeeded in bringing him under obligations which called so strongly upon his gratitude that he revealed his secret to him. There was about as much hocus-pocus observed in the preparation of this powder, as there is in the trituration of some of those of the present day. It was to be crystalized, dissolved, filtered, and re-crystalized, and this process several times repeated. It was thought necessary to expose it to the action of the sun 365 days, much care being taken, during this time, to secure to each crystal the action of the rays, and the processes of trituration, dissolving, and re-crystalizing, was continued in rapid succession; and, at last, it came out what it originally was—*Blue Vitriol*.

This powder was used for the purpose of curing wounds, but instead of being applied to the wound itself, a portion of it was dissolved in water, and any garment, or substance which had been stained with the blood which had escaped from it, was steeped in the solution, whilst the wound was dressed and left seven days to Nature, and the influence which this powder could exert on it at a distance.

The following is a remarkable cure which it is said to have performed, and which established the practice in England: "Mr. James Howel, a gentleman celebrated by his '*Dendrologia*,' and other works, in endeavoring to part two of his friends in a duel, received a severe wound of his hand. Alarmed at this accident, one of the combatants bound up the cut with his garter, took him home, and sent for assistance. The King, upon hearing of the event, sent one of his own surgeons to attend him; but, as in the

course of four or five days, the wound was not recovering very favorably, he made application to Sir Kenelm Digby, of whose knowledge regarding some extraordinary remedies for the healing of wounds he had become apprized. Sir Kenelm first inquired whether he possessed anything that had the blood upon it, upon which Mr. Howel immediately named the garter with which his hand had been bound, which was accordingly sent for. A basin of water being brought, Sir Kenelm put into it a handful of powder of vitriol, and dissolved it therein. He then took the bloody garter and immersed it in the fluid, while Mr. H. stood conversing with a gentleman in the corner of the room; but he suddenly started, and upon being asked the reason, replied that he had lost all pain—that a pleasing kind of freshness, as it were a wet cold napkin, had passed over his hand, and that the inflammation, which before had been so tormenting, had vanished. He was then advised to lay aside all his plasters, to keep the wound clean, and in a moderate temperature. After dinner the garter was taken out of the basin and placed to dry before a large fire: but no sooner was this done than Mr. H.'s servant came running to Sir Kenelm, to say that her master's hand had again inflamed, and that it was as bad as before: whereupon the garter was again placed into the liquid, and, before the return of the servant, all was well and easy again. In the course of five or six days the wound was cicatrized, and a cure performed." Through the influence of James I, and his surgeon Dr. Mayerne, known to commentators as the Dr. Caius of Shakespeare, the practice was extended throughout Great Britain and France, so that not only Sovereigns, Princes, Knights, and Court Physicians practiced it, but there was scarcely a village barber who was not prepared to treat wounds after this fashion.

Sir Kenelm Digby, in a lengthy discourse before an audience composed of noblemen, and other distinguished personages, at Montpellier, attempted to explain the rationale of its operation upon philosophic principles. His views in relation to the emanation of light, the impinging rays of the sun, the formation of wind, &c., as bearing on his doctrines of the Sympathetical Cure, I am sorry I have not space to introduce, as I am sure, that like some of the propositions and arguments of Homœopathy, if they possess no other merit, their subtle and refined ridiculousness and want of common sense would amuse you.

The *Unguentum Armarium*, or Weapon Ointment, was also used

for the cure of wounds, but, like the Sympathetic Powder, instead of being applied to the wound, the instrument which inflicted it was anointed, carefully wrapped up, placed away, and dressed anew whenever the wound became painful. If the sword, or instrument with which the wound was made, could not be found, it was thought all sufficient to make one like it, which was treated as if it was the original.

The unguents used for this purpose were made from human fat and blood, mummy, moss obtained from dead men's skulls, bull's blood, &c. A serious and animated discussion was for a long time kept up in the Sympathetic School, in consequence of a division among its members as to "whether it was necessary that the moss should grow absolutely in the skull of a thief who had hung on the gallows, and whether the ointment, while compounding, was to be stirred with a murderer's knife?"

A case is reported, in which it is said that Lord Gillbourne, an English nobleman, performed a wonderful cure upon a carpenter, who had severely wounded himself with an axe. "The axe, bespattered with blood, was sent for, besmeared with an ointment, wrapped up warmly, and carefully hung up in the closet. The carpenter was immediately relieved, and all went on well for some time, when, however, the wound became exceedingly painful, and, upon resorting to his lordship, it was ascertained that the axe had fallen from the nail by which it was suspended, and thereby became uncovered"! This was called the cure by the dry way, in contradistinction to the Sympathetic *Powder*, which was called the cure by the wet way.

There is no want of evidence to prove that this practice was extensively resorted to, and performed many very astonishing cures, not only in the treatment of wounds in the human subject, but also in those of the lower order of animals. Lord Bacon alludes to it in his Natural History, and speaks of the high testimonials in its favor. Sir Walter Scott, in the Lay of the Last Minstrel, introduces the practice thus:—

"But she has ta'en the broken lance,
And washed it from the clotied gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er,
William of Belorain in trance.
Whene'er she turned it round and round,
Twisted, as if she galled his wound;
Then to her maidens she did say
That he should be whole man and sound."

Dryden makes Ariel say, when speaking in reference to Hippolito's wound :—

“ Anoint the sword which pierced him with this
Weapon salve, and wrap it close from air
’Till I have time to visit it again.”

Perkinism, or *Metallic Tractors*, was a true-born Yankee, and I am proud to say, I believe it is the only thing of the kind that we ever floated upon our transatlantic brethren. Dr. Elisha Perkins, a native of Norwich, Connecticut, made known the discovery of a remedy for the cure of Rheumatism, inflammations, and various other complaints, which he termed the “Metallic Tractors,” and which also bore the name of the inventor—“Perkinism.” This great discovery (!) was made shortly after Galvani had completed his experiments and discoveries in relation to the effect of two different metals in producing muscular contractions, when applied in contact, which were published to the world, for the first time, about the year 1791, and from which it is supposed Perkins borrowed the idea upon which he founded his system.

This system consisted of two small bits of metal, one iron and the other brass, of the same shape and dimensions, about three inches long, pointed at one end and blount at the other. These were to be drawn over the diseased organ for about twenty minutes, and the cure, as many were willing to vouch, followed in a very few minutes after. The inventor took out a patent for the discovery, was expelled from the Medical Society to which he belonged in consequence, and very soon obtained high evidences of the value and success of the practice by a number of cures which were affirmed by clergymen, members of Congress, &c., who also very modestly gave it as their opinion that it was the most important discovery ever made in the Medical science—surpassing even those of Jenner and Harvey. Thus panoplied, in two years they had crossed the Atlantic. In Copenhagen they were employed at the Royal Hospital, and a large volume was published in the Danish language, containing accounts of experiments with them, and, in illustration, a vast number of cases in which they had performed cures. Among the highly educated and intelligent population of London they received much favor, and by them a Perkinian Institution was founded, and the distinguished Lord Rivers elected its President, and eleven other gentlemen, scarcely less distinguished, were elected Vice Presidents. The transactions of this Society were

regularly published, and the triumphs of the system celebrated by public banquets.

Among those worthies who sent their evidence across the water, the names* of thirteen clergymen, besides members of Congress, and other functionaries of minor importance appear. A "Perkinistic Committee" in Great Britain, in making their report, stated—"Mr. Perkins has annually laid before the public a large collection of new cases, communicated to them for that purpose by disinterested and intelligent characters, from almost every quarter of Great Britain. In regard to the competency of these vouchers, it will be sufficient simply to state that, amongst others whose names have been attached to their communications, are eight Professors in four different Universities, twenty-one regular Physicians, nineteen Surgeons, thirty Clergymen, twelve of whom are Doctors of Divinity, and numerous other characters of equal respectability."

In different parts of Europe it is said that the demand for these little pieces of metal was so great, that the mechanics could not manufacture them fast enough to supply the wants of the people; and although the labor, together with the materials of which they were composed, was not really worth more than a few cents, they were greedily purchased at twenty-five dollars a pair, which was the regular price of the patentee. All benevolent females carried a pair in their pockets to use on persons who were not able to purchase them: poets courted the muses in recording and consecrating their many triumphs: royalty and nobility smiled upon them, and the clergy were industrious with their pens in writing lengthy articles, in order to spread their usefulness. One wrote in metaphoric strains as follows—"I have used the Tractors with success in several other cases in my own family, and although like Naaman the Syrian, I cannot tell why the waters of Jordan should be better than Abana and Parpar, rivers of Damascus; yet, since experience has proved them so, no reasoning can change the opinion."—Thus verifying the lines of Burns, that—

Ev'n Ministers, they have been kenn'd,
In holy rapture
A rousing whid to vend
And nail't wi' Scripture.

It were useless to enumerate the many evidences of the positive success of this practice; page upon page, and indeed volumes might be filled up with examples of the kind. The number of cures reported to have been performed in a very short time, in

Great Britain, amounted to 5000 ; and the number estimated from the best data the friends of the system could gather, including those not regularly reported, amounted to one million and a-half. The mass of the Medical Profession, comprehending the more enlightened and independent of its members, opposed the practice and pronounced it a delusion,—not, however, without first making experiments and ascertaining that wooden tractors (the patients not being aware of the deception), produced effects quite as sudden, and relief full as marked as when metallic ones were used. For their opposition they were accused of the basest motives and feelings, in terms like the following: “For very obvious reasons Medical men must never be expected to recommend the use of Perkinism. The Tractors must trust for their patronage to the enlightened and philanthropic out of the Profession, or to Medical men retired from practice, and who know of no other interest than the luxury of relieving the distressed.” And again, in the shape of a query—“Will the Medical man who has spent much money and labor in the pursuit of the arcana of Physic, and on the exercise of which depends his support in life, proclaim the inefficiency of his art, and recommend a remedy to his patient which the most unlettered in society can employ as advantageously as himself?” Much offence was taken (as we see now the case with the friends of Homœopathy,) at any attempt to class this system of practice in the same category with those acknowledged delusions which had preceded it ; in relation to which Perkins himself says—“The motives which must have impelled to this attempt at classing the *Metallic Practice* with the most paltry of empirical projects, are but too thinly veiled to escape detection.”

Notwithstanding the great popularity of this system ; its thousands of vaunted cures ; the brilliant hopes which it excited in the lovers of health and longevity, and its prevalence even in the present century, it has yet been buried so long in the tomb of its sisters, that I doubt whether many of you ever heard more of it than what has just been detailed. During the last summer I commissioned a friend, who was visiting the Eastern cities, to procure Dr. Perkins’ book for me, who assured me that he had searched, faithfully, all the book-stores that he could find in three or four of the largest cities in the United States, without being able to find a man who had ever heard the subject mentioned before, until at last he met with one who laughed outright as he propounded his inquiries, and,

in explanation to my somewhat offended friend at this novel reply from a stranger, told him that he had once been a melancholic, and that his Physician had recommended to him the reading of this book, which he did very much to the exercise of his risible faculties; and that his question had suddenly brought to his mind two very ludicrous subjects—Perkins' book and his disease. Since that I have made other efforts to procure the book, but have not been able to do so, and all that I know about the subject I have gathered from Reviews. Here allow me to acknowledge my indebtedness for most of the facts which I have obtained in relation to it, to that beautiful little book written by our distinguished countryman, Oliver Wendell Holmes, M. D., of Boston, entitled "Homœopathy and its Kindred Delusions."

It may here be mentioned to the credit of our Profession, that, although we oppose these systems of delusion during the days of their triumph and prosperity, yet when they have outlived the affections of their best friends, and are called upon to yield up the last lingering spark of vitality, then it is that the firm and faithful enemy who opposed their progress in life, steps forward, and magnanimously performs for them the last sad offices—sees them quietly entombed, and writes their brief history and epitaph. This is a duty always left for us, and most cheerfully we perform it; and, disclaiming any feelings of irreverence in the sacred figure, may we not say, if not "first at the cross," we are at least "last at the sepulchre."

